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Rev W. D. Grace 5
Jan 11. 1876

THE
RESTORATION
THEORY,

WITH SOME REFERENCE TO A SERMON BY THE

REV. D. J. MACDONNELL,

BY THE

REV. D. D. McLEOD, ANCASTER, ONT.

TORONTO:
PRESBYTERIAN PRINTING HOUSE, 102 BAY STREET.
1876.

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INTRODUCTORY.

I propose in the following pages to make a few remarks on the sermon of Rev. D. J. Macdonnell, which has created some sensation in our Church and in the community. and also to discuss the doctrine therein referred to. It is no matter of surprise in the present day to find a minister of the Gospel unfamiliar with some of the subjects which it is part of his duty to expound. Nor is it a matter of surprise to find a professed Christian teacher impatient under some of the teachings of Scripture. These are every day occurrences. What has justly caused some surprise is that such a sermon as that referred to should issue from a Presbyterian pulpit. And the extent of the surprise occasioned, shows how happily rare the deliverance of such sermons are in our Church. The sermon as a whole, is a confession, in the first place, of not having come to a definite belief on the subject discussed. And second, the expression of a wish, and almost a hope, that the doctrine as now held by us may not be true. And further it shows that Mr. McD. considers the subject has not been sufficiently studied; he wishes the Church to sit down devoutly and study it, and that some second Augustine might rise up and give a deliverance upon it. This implies that the compilers of the confession did not sufficiently study it, and that their deliverance upon it is not satisfactory. Now that they studied it as much as any other part of the confession probably, no one can deny. And their deliverance upon it has stood the inspection of two hundred years, and of many learned and pious men, quite as safe interpreters of Scripture, and possibly more learned than even Augustine himself. It is quite questionable therefore whether a second Augustine would throw any additional light on the subject. The Holy Spirit is promised to all of us, to guide us into all truth, as well as to the more learned, and He is our best guide in investigating

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such a doctrine. The sermon would seem to suggest also that this was a difficulty not sufficiently pondered by the Church. And some ignorantly think it has now been raised for the first time. I think it would have helped Mr. McD.'s people, had he told them how old and stale the difficulty is. For it is no new one, nor by any means the only one in the Bible or the Confession. If any one thinks it profitable to place problems and difficulties before his people, he will find such attached to everyone of the system of doctrines to which Mr. McD. professes to adhere.

But it is not my intention to criticize the sermon narrowly. It would not perhaps be fair to do so. And yet, when a sermon so plainly suggests that what we hold to be a dangerous error may be true—that what we hold is not to be found in Scripture, is to be found in Scripture—it cannot be altogether overlooked in discussing the present aspect of the question. Meantime I would only make one remark on the sermon with reference to the theory of restoration suggested, and on his speech in vindication of the sermon before the Presbytery; and that is, if we adopt that view of the truth, we will part company with all the evangelical churches in the world. That, of course, is of no consequence if the view is right. But the mere fact of the character of those we would leave being such as it is—for learning, intelligence, and Christian worth—that alone should make us pause. We leave all who hold with the compilers of the confession—pious and learned men of every age, devout students of God's word, sound Divines—and enter the school of the Rationalist, the Unitarian, the Universalist. We may have the company of Tennyson and a few German commentators—but even these in all sober Christian charity are not more fit to instruct us, and not more likely to guide us safely than the compilers of the confession. This is only presented as a consideration that should have some weight with us all, and not as an argument. We are not to bow to human authority but to truth. But it is universally acknowledged that the compilers of the confession were godly and learned expounders of divine truth, and we should have good reason

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to offer when we reject their deliverance on a subject of this kind. In his reply to the Presbytery, Mr. McD. claims freedom to investigate truth. Now we all desire this freedom, and are as jealous of our freedom as ministers of the Gospel to investigate the truth, as any one can be. Mr. McD. knows that he has that freedom under the confession he has adopted. He knows that no one desires to hinder him in his investigations. But freedom to investigate the truth is not freedom to propagate errors, to which this sermon comes dangerously near, if it does not really do so. And it was on this account that it seemed to propagate error, and not because it was an attempt to investigate the truth, that the whole church as well as the Presbytery felt it was necessary to take it up. And with regard to the subject of restoration itself, I would only say at present: if the view of ultimate restoration is adopted—then every other doctrine in our system must be modified in accordance with it. In short, adopt this view and we give up not one doctrine of our confession, but every one of those doctrines which distinguish us among the reformed churches. "It naturally, and in fact, leads to a renunciation of all the essential doctrines of the New Testament." It is the old lie of the devil in another aspect,—“Ye shall not surely die.”

DIFFICULTIES OF THE RESTORATION THEORY.

1. Suppose it is true that after a few years—for millions even are but a few compared with eternity—those who have been sent to hell will be restored; on what ground will they be restored? Some restorationists say on the ground of the work of Christ. And this seems the view favoured in the sermon referred to. Then the work of Christ did not avail for them while they were on the earth, and the efficacy of the death of Christ to save sinners extends beyond the day of judgment. Now do we not hold as taught by Scripture that the work of Christ as a Saviour is completed before the day of judgment. Is there any single passage of

Scripture that points to His carrying on the work of Saviour after He has judged the world—and said “depart ye cursed.” There is not one that we can find. Does Scripture or does reason itself lead us to believe or to expect that to those persons to whom He has said “depart from me ye cursed into everlasting fire”—He will yet afterwards say, “come, ye blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.”

If so, then the atoning work of Christ must be continued after that sentence of condemnation has been pronounced—and the sentence must read, “Depart ye cursed into everlasting fire, ye whom I still love and will yet redeem.” Then it will be that after Christ has made an end of all things, after he has closed this dispensation, after He has once for all judged this world—another dispensation will be begun, another day of judgment appointed, or a work of judgment be continually carried on, all which is entirely contrary to the teaching of Scripture.

2. Again, if sinners in hell are to be restored on the ground of the work of Christ, then they must be dealt with as moral and responsible beings. They must be approached and appealed to as reasonable beings. They must have this gospel of deliverance preached to them, they must be wrought upon by the Holy Spirit—for surely of themselves they will not be willing or able, any more than we are, to repent and turn to God. And if preached to, why not prayed for now, and why not be prayed for by Christians now as well as by the saints in glory. Surely it will be right to seek to hasten their repentance by every means. We are to pray for what is according to the will of God—and their deliverance is according to His will. But Scripture teaches us to regard the lost as beyond the reach of prayer and the appeals of the Gospel.

3. Restorationists know, as we all do, that mere suffering does not change the heart—nay, can we not reasonably conceive that this great suffering should awaken a more deadly enmity against God, and plunge the sinner into more violent blasphemy and rebellion. Or, if we admit such suffering is needed to bring some sinners to repentance, then what monsters in wickedness must they be who

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require centuries of hell to move them. And what weakness, what want of resource does it argue in God, (I speak with reverence,) since He can find no other better way to bring these sinners to repentance than by subjecting them to "everlasting fire"—that is to some centuries of fire? Could not the Holy Spirit bring these poor sinners to repentance without that? Has He not brought many other sinners as wicked as these to repentance without having to send them to hell at all, even by the gentlest means?

And if these poor creatures are still the objects of the love of God as they must be if He means to save them, then can we think it just or right to subject them to everlasting fire, that is to fire for so long a period as may be called everlasting—before He brings them to repentance, when He could have brought them to repentance by other means, and when He has brought myriads of others to repentance as guilty as they were, without subjecting them to such suffering?

Hence we see we must believe, if the Restoration view be adopted, (1) that there will be another dispensation and another day of judgment, and (2) that there will be missionaries sent to the condemned or appeals to repentance addressed to them as responsible and free agents, and (3) that there may be prayers offered for them, and (4) that God's ways in bringing sinners to repentance are most unjustly unequal.

4. But again, as we have said, if this restoration theory be true, the offer of mercy in this present dispensation of grace made to the sinner is not God's ultimatum, it is not His last offer. There is still hope for the sinner after death. And why not only a few years after death? So that while we tell the sinner he must suffer in hell, he can say, "no matter, for in a few years I will be in heaven." And as the work of restoration goes on, for it must be a gradual process, sinners from hell must constantly be rising to heaven until hell is empty. The "great gulf" of which Christ speaks must be bridged over, and then after every sinner has been restored, on what ground can the devils be still left in prison; must not they

by the same reasoning follow, according to merit. Does not such a doctrine rob the gospel appeal of all its power—when it says, “now is the day of grace—and now is the day of salvation.” That is not all the truth. According to this theory there is another day of grace—there is hope in hell—there is salvation in hell—there is no everlasting fire—there is no unpardonable sin. To preach that is surely not the gospel the Bible reveals. And what reason has Mr. McD. or any of us to think that men whose hearts will not be won by the love of God in Christ, will be won by the statement that “God must save every man.” Reason and common sense seem to assure us that to tell men this would be the surest way to bring contempt on Christ, and would rob hell of its terrors in the eyes of the sinner. If after a few years of suffering sinners are to be restored, many will willingly pay this price for liberty to sin, and those martyrs who shed their blood for Christ will not have much advantage over those who crucified Him, seeing that they will spend eternity together in the enjoyment of the same rewards and blessedness of heaven. In short, what is this restoration theory but another and a worse form of purgatory after all. The idea that gave rise to the doctrine of a purgatory was partly, that by means of it some of the difficulties attending on the merely two-fold destiny in the future might be got rid of, and this restoration view is adopted for very much the same reason. But we see that the difficulties into which it leads its advocates are greater than those from which they seek to escape.

5. And further—and this seems to me the most important consideration—what is God’s view of sin? Is it the same as ours? He saw it so vile as only to be atoned for by the death of His own son—and when to man’s other sin is added the rejection of that atonement—can God regard it lightly. Does He not know what doom it deserves? And how do we know but that there is something in the very nature of sin and the sinner’s case that renders restoration impossible after Christ has been rejected. “Who is capable of determining the great question—When shall all that the justice of God required, all that His law threatened, all that is requisite to answer the ends of punishment be attained in

the doom of hell.” And a punishment we take the same way say we know say that it is to consign the sinner to the presence.

6. But another dispensation in our view—it is present dispensation intends to save them they repent. to make a man not one day—room for the could not in fore there could that which is

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7. Again a thousand years that time, with than they were more than were likely to repent long being unend of a thousand it, and their guilt this is so, if there hell, are they

the doom of the sinner? Only the Infinite intelligence can." And He tells us that these ends are only attained by a punishment that is everlasting. Unless, then, we can say we take the same view of sin that God does, unless we can say we know the nature of it as well as He does, we cannot say that it is either unreasonable, or unjust, or unmerciful to consign the impenitent sinner to eternal banishment from His presence.

6. But again, if the wicked in hell are under another dispensation—which they must be according to our view—it must be also a dispensation of grace, as this present dispensation is. God still loves and pities, and intends to save them. If so, they will be saved so soon as they repent. How long, then, will it take of hell suffering to make a man repent? Surely but a short time. Would not one day—one year be enough? Then where is there room for the everlasting punishment in any sense? God could not in justice keep them in after repentance; therefore there could be no punishment at all corresponding to that which is described in Scripture.

But does God love the wicked in hell? All Scripture testifies not. They have passed beyond His love. They are with the devil and his angels. There is no passage that speaks of them but as forever cast out—cut off from God to all eternity as those who have no hope, who perish, are rejected, lost, cast into the fire, cast off, bid to depart from God, vessels of wrath fitted to destruction, who shall never see life.

7. Again, if the wicked continue in hell without repentance a thousand years, or any number of years, refusing to repent all that time, will they not be much more guilty at the end of it than they were at the beginning? Will they not deserve hell more than when they entered, and will they not be much less likely to repent? Will they not be far more prone to sin after so long being under the power of it, so that their repentance at the end of a thousand years is less likely than at the beginning of it, and their guilt then is aggravated a thousand-fold. Now if this is so, if they are restored after thousands of years of sin in hell, are they so much better than the devil that he should be

kept there to all eternity. No, if they are restored, so must he. The same passages that would lead us to hope for their restoration, as reasonably include him. But we have no word of any such deliverance in Scripture in reference to the devil. In their case, therefore, as in his, the consequence and punishment of sin is more sin and increasing guilt to all eternity.

8. Again, if they are in hell still in a state of probation—on trial whether they will repent or not—is there any likelihood that they will repent? They were on probation on the earth and failed, and why, when every cause that led to their failure on earth is aggravated a thousand-fold, why may they not fail again even in hell? Will a few years of hell-suffering be more efficacious to convert the soul than the love of Christ presented in the gospel? If it be said that God will compel them to repent, then surely their punishment has failed of any good purpose in their case. We see then from these and many other considerations that might be adduced, that the restoration view is just as full of difficulty as the doctrine the Bible teaches.

And the truth is that the difficulty in the orthodox view arises not from any dealings of God, but from our limited capacity to understand His ways and thoughts. The difficulty is, "why does not God think as I do; and act as I think He should." In short the difficulty is one of rationalism and not of faith. The same faith that enables us to accept all the other mysteries of our faith, and wait patiently for their explanation in the future, enables us to accept of this truth also. "These shall go away into everlasting fire but the righteous into life eternal." It may seem hard thus to condemn eternally, but we may rest assured that God is not less just, or less merciful, than we, His sinful creatures.

However, passing from these and many other difficulties that attach to the Restoration theory, we come now to the testimony of Scripture, on which I make two remarks introductory:

WHAT SCRIPTURE TEACHES.

1. If the Restoration theory is the true Gospel of Christ, if there is no everlasting fire, "surely our Lord Himself has helped to mislead his people, since in the very sentence to

be pronounced lasting." And the Restoration minence would left to be gle sages that may 3, The whole has strangely theory be true are—1. Matt. speaketh again him, neither In Mark iii. 2 shall blasphemy, but is not most evident onymous with

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be pronounced at the last day, He has used the word everlasting." And—2, Surely we might reasonably expect that if the Restoration view be the true Gospel of Christ, much prominence would be given to it in Scripture. It would not be left to be gleaned by far-fetched inference from a few passages that may quite justly be interpreted otherwise. And—3, The whole Christian Church up to the present time has strangely misinterpreted Scripture, if the Restoration theory be true. The passages which Mr. McD. quotes, are—1. Matt. xii. 32, in which it is said: "But whosoever speaketh against the Holy Ghost it shall not be forgiven him, neither in this world, neither in the world to come." In Mark iii. 29, the passage is given thus:—"But he that shall blaspheme against the Holy Ghost hath never forgiveness, but is in danger of eternal damnation." Now is it not most evident there that "hath never forgiveness" is synonymous with eternal damnation?

That passage above surely declares that there is in Scripture such a thing as sin that hath never forgiveness, that there are some who are guilty of this sin, and surely to assert that there is a time coming when these shall be forgiven, is to contradict in the most direct way this clear language of Scripture.

Another passage quoted is 1 John, v. 16.—"If any man see his brother sin a sin which is not unto death, he shall ask and he shall give him life for them that sin not unto death." "There is a sin unto death, I do not say that he shall pray for it." Mark ix. 43, 2 Thess., 1-9, "Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction?" Everlasting destruction—is there any greater mystery in these words than in the term everlasting life.

Jude vi. refers to angels. "The angels He hath reserved in everlasting chains under darkness unto the judgment of the great day." Again Matt. xxv. 46,—"These shall go away into everlasting punishment, but the righteous into life eternal." These are the passages Mr. McD. quotes. I would add a few others. Luke vi. 24; Luke xvi. 25-26; Revelation xiv. 11; xx. 10-15; Isaiah xxxiii. 14; Matt. vii. 22-23. Heb. vi. 4. These, and many other passages

which do not so directly indicate eternity of future punishment, but yet do so by implication as strong as though it were said in so many words, seem sufficient to establish this truth beyond question. "They leave us (to use the language of a most learned and philosophic divine) unsheltered, unreprieved, naked and trembling before the terrible simplicity of revelation, of those unambiguous oracles in which that God who is a consuming fire, hath described Himself in the very volume of mercy as bidding 'the cursed into everlasting fire,' into a 'fire that is not quenched,' that is 'unquenchable,' whose 'smoke ascendeth up for ever,' whose 'torment is day and night for ever and ever.' Let us take advantage of this merciful dispensation; let us dare to speak about these eternal miseries as matter to which reason may address itself; with awe indeed, but, as yet without being utterly lost and consumed in the terrible truth it contemplates."

There continues, however, to be much discussion on the terms translated "everlasting," "eternal." It is said their meaning is to be restricted to a limited period of time. Let us hear the opinion of a competent scholar on this subject, therefore, and to his comment there is no need to add anything further. The argument in it has never been successfully met. He says:—"I trust it will not be questioned in regard to the nine cases where *aion* is applied to the happiness of the righteous in another world, and the fifty-one cases where *aionios* is applied to the same, that a happiness without limits, without end, is intended to be designated. Can it be reasonably doubted, then, that the five cases in which *aion* is applied to the future punishment of the wicked, and the seven cases in which *aionios* is applied to the same subject, have a meaning like that of the preceeding cases? The time designated in both is future; the world is future. The intention of the writers seems very apparently to have been similar in both cases. The invariable laws of interpretation, therefore, would seem to demand a like exegesis. I take it to be a rule in construing all antithetic forms of expression, that, where you can perceive the force of one side of the antithesis, you do of course come to a knowledge of the

force of the other side, and death on the one side, and death on the other side, is it that qualifies death? The word *eternal* is without doubt be raised to say that the world is without any end. If then the world is without end (which is the case) the continuance of some twelve future miseries preting language to the conclusion that the cases? It is the Scripture that the wicked, not of the righteous Godhead.

philologically the declaration that God and less; nor the world is end punishment on *aion* and

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force of the other side. If *life eternal* is promised on one side, and *death eternal* is threatened on the other and opposite one, is it not to be supposed that the word *eternal* which qualifies *death* is a word of equal force and import with the word *eternal* which qualifies *life*? In no other case could a doubt be raised with regard to such a principle. I venture to say that the exception here (if such a one must be made) is without any parallel in the just principles of interpretation. If then the words *aion* and *aionios* are applied sixty times (which is the fact) in the New Testament to designate the continuance of the future happiness of the righteous, and some twelve times to designate the continuance of the future misery of the wicked, by what principles of interpreting language does it become possible for us to avoid the conclusion that these words have the same sense in both cases? It does most plainly and indubitably follow that if the Scriptures have not asserted the endless punishment of the wicked, neither have they asserted the endless happiness of the righteous, nor the endless glory and existence of the Godhead. The result seems to me to be plain and philologically and exegetically certain. It is this: either the declarations of the Scriptures do not establish the facts that God and His glory and praise and happiness are endless; nor that the happiness of the righteous in a future world is endless; or else, they establish the fact that the punishment of the wicked is endless."—Prof. Moses Stuart, on *aion* and *aionios*.

With regard to the passages on the other side which Mr. McD. quotes, I think it will appear that he draws a conclusion from them which is not warranted. He says "the teaching of Scripture is not clear on this point. It is not such as to give anyone a right to say dogmatically, 'This is true, and that is false.'" We hold that the teaching of Scripture is clear and unmistakeable, and does enable us to say dogmatically, that the restoration theory is not true, is not once clearly stated in the whole Bible, and to say that the punishment of the wicked is eternal, is a truth which is clearly stated, and can only be set aside by wresting words from their ordinary meaning.

The first passage which he quotes that I shall refer to is 1 Cor. xv. 22: "For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive." I shall quote the comments on this passage given in the Commentary of Lange, who, Mr. McD. says, favours more or less distinctly the view of restoration. (Although, the commentary is published as Lange's, the comments on the various books are made by different writers—that on this book by Dr. Kling.) "Some find in this passage a statement of universal salvation—the restoration of all. The question is: ought not the word *all* to have the same scope in the two clauses? The context does not justify our limiting it to believers in the first clause; for he is throughout treating of the dead in general whatever may have been their religious state. . . . But whether the dogma of a general restoration is a Pauline doctrine is, *to say the least*," (the italics are in the commentary) "exceedingly problematical." Then it goes on, as Burger says: "It is not possible to prove from our text, nor yet from the context, the doctrine of a so-called restoration of all things, which asserts that all at last, both good and bad, even the devil and his angels, shall be made partakers of divine grace. . . . Accordingly we must side with those who take the word *all* in its broadest sense, and understand the being made alive of a general resurrection. Accordingly the main thought would be, that Christ, as the risen one, is the informing principle and commencement of all restoration to life in the race, on the part of God. In this respect he constitutes a parallel to Adam." "As the death of all mankind came by Adam, so the resurrection of all men came by Christ; the wicked shall be raised by Him *officio judicis* by the power of Christ as their Lord and Judge: The righteous shall be raised *beneficio mediatoris* by virtue of their union with Him as their Head."—*Valpy*. The necessity for adopting this view, the commentator adds, will more fully appear as we proceed.

We see, then, this passage gives no support to the theory of restoration in the view of this commentator, and can be explained quite legitimately in accordance with the orthodox doctrine. And this could be much more fully shown

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from the nature of the Apostle's argument, and from the views of the most learned commentators, both ancient and modern, did space permit.

Verse 25—"For He must reign till He hath put all enemies under His feet; the last enemy that shall be destroyed is death" (*i. e.*, death, the last enemy, shall be destroyed). Now I hope it will suffice to say that in this passage, from 25 to 27, neither Lange nor any commentator he quotes, and he quotes all of note, nearly, sees any reference whatever, or any evidence whatever, for the idea of restoration.

And with regard to verse 28, which is—"And when all things shall be subdued unto Him, then shall the Son also Himself be subjected unto Him that put all things under Him, that God may be all in all." "In this last clause," which may read, "in order that God may be the all things in all"—though it seems a slender foundation on which to raise so great a structure—"is found the main authority for the support of the doctrine of a final restoration of all things." Now, though there does not seem much danger of this passage ever becoming generally accepted in that sense, and though it would require more than this brief statement to overthrow the passages on the other side, let us hear what Lange says of it:

"The expression, 'be the all things,' signifies primarily absolute supremacy or rule. But how are we to understand the other expression, 'in all?' Is the adjective to be construed as masculine or neuter? On the former supposition its scope must be limited to believers . . . and this entirely excludes the doctrine of restoration. If the other view of the adjective is taken, then all created existences must be understood, and thus with this will come the cessation of damnation, and so the restoration of all things. But could the Apostle Paul who puts the lost in contrast with the saved as he does in 1. 18, have had such a doctrine in his mind?" And in words following for which we have not room, the commentator distinctly repudiates the view of restoration, and asserts the orthodox view. Mr. MacD. says, referring to the 25th and 28th verses: "Who could read those words if he had not those other passages

about eternal punishment without thinking, that by and by the time will come, when all things will be put under Jesus Christ, etc; and he asks, 'Does that mean shutting them up in hell to sin, and disobey for ever and ever?' What does conquering enemies mean with Christ if not transforming them into friends?" I would answer his first question by saying that Scripture cannot contradict itself, and where a number of passages clearly state a particular truth, these passages must guide us in the interpretation of any other passage that may seem capable of an interpretation which contradicts these; and I would answer the second part of the question by a quotation from Lange, who says: "We must therefore suppose them to be shut up, as it were, in some prison house, in some outer darkness where they shall be as if they were not, and neither the sight, nor the hearing, nor the influence of them shall, in any way disturb the blessedness which shall reign supreme throughout the realms of God, the Father in whose presence there will be a fulness of joy for ever and ever."

And I would answer the third part of the question, thus: If conquering enemies means with Christ transforming them into friends, then it plainly follows from this, that the devil is not conquered yet by Christ, and will not be conquered till he is released from hell and transformed into a friend. Now surely this is quite contrary to the view which Scripture gives of the exalted Saviour towards His enemies, as in Heb. x., 12-13, "Sat down on the right hand of God . . . expecting till His enemies be made His footstool." And in the verse quoted above, I Cor. xv. 25, "He must reign till He hath put all enemies under His feet"—which expressions cannot mean transforming them into friends.

Phil. ii. 9-10, is another passage given as bearing on the subject of restoration,— "Wherefore God hath highly exalted Him and given Him a name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth." On which Ellicott says: "The three classes here mentioned are not to be understood with

any ethical reference, "but simply and men upon earth last class he de of whom Paul places.

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any ethical reference." (*i. e.*, as though of saints and sinners) "but simply and plainly, Angels and Archangels in heaven, men upon earth, and the departed under the earth. The last class he does not think refers to the lost or the devils of whom Paul, Eph. vi. 12, speaks, as dwelling in high places.

Jonathan Edwards says on this passage: "By things in heaven is meant the Angels, and by things in earth is meant elect men living on the earth, and by things under the earth, or in the lower parts of the earth, is meant the souls of departed saints whose bodies are gone under the earth, that by things or creatures under the earth is meant souls of buried saints and not devils and damned souls in hell, is manifest from Rev. v. 13,—'And every creature which is in heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth, and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them, heard I saying, blessing, and honour, and glory, and power be unto Him that sitteth upon the throne, and the Lamb for ever and ever.' This would not be said of devils and wicked damned souls, who are far from thus praising and extolling God and Christ with such exaltation: instead of that they are continually blaspheming them."

No doubt there is coming a time when every knee shall bow before Christ and acknowledge Him Lord, but that does not imply that His enemies shall become His friends. The devils believe and tremble. And no more awful, more overwhelming proof of His Divine Sovereignty can be displayed before an assembled universe than shall be seen in the utter and eternal subjection of His enemies in hell. "In the place of torment, God, in His terrible justice reigns alone. Satan and his angels and his victims serve in penal fire and chains for ever."

Eph. i. 10, and Colossians i. 19-20, contain this same glorious truth of Christ's universal sovereignty, which we hold, and which Scripture teaches is quite consistent with the fact of His enemies being in subjection to Him, as it is said He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh, the Lord shall have them in derision. I will, therefore, first, only refer to the one clause in the passage in Colossians which seems to need

explanation, namely—"by Him to reconcile all things unto himself; by Him, I say, whether they be things in earth or things in Heaven."

On which passage, Ellicott says: "The revelation contained in these words is of the most profound nature, and must be interpreted with the utmost caution and reverence. This, and no less than this, it does say—that the eternal and incarnate Son is the *causa medians*, (*i. e.*, mediating cause,) by which the absolute totality of created things shall be restored into its primal harmony with its Creator, . . . more than this it does not say, and when God is silent it is not for man to speak." Jonathan Edwards holds that the term all signifies—all intelligent elect creatures. Alford says on it: "So that our interpretation may be thus summed up, all creation subsists in Christ; all creation is therefore affected by His act of propitiation; sinful creation is in the strictest sense, reconciled from being at enmity; sinless creation ever at a distance from His unapproachable purity (Job xv. 15; iv. 18) is lifted into nearer participation, and higher glorification of Him, and is thus reconciled, though not in the strictest, yet in a very intelligible and allowable sense. And of the "all things" in Eph. i. 10, he takes the same view. Jonathan Edwards also takes the same view as given above.

While Ellicott says on "the all things" in the passage, Eph. i. 10, "Without entering into the profound questions which have been connected with these words, it may be said that, as on the one hand all limiting interpretations, etc., are opposed to the generalizing neuter and the comprehensiveness of the expressions, so on the other hand, reference to the redemption or restoration of those for whom our Lord said everlasting fire was prepared, must be pronounced *fundamentally impossible*."

There only now remains unnoticed the passage Mr. McD. quotes from Rom. xi. 32—"For God hath concluded them all in unbelief that He might have mercy upon all." On which he remarks,—“The mercy is as wide as the belief.” This, he says, is the natural interpretation of these words. Now I am not aware that these

words are given of restoration understand the interpretation on all when On this passage both clauses given to the all men?" (without limitation all" men who men upon whom mercy is not from the salvation equally gracious mercy or not therefore all mercy, God having mercy Gentiles), and one shepherd

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words are generally appealed to as supporting the doctrine of restoration. And I think few will conclude that, to understand that doctrine, as stated there, is the natural interpretation of these words. And did God not had mercy on all when He offers Christ to the world as a Saviour? On this passage Alford remarks: "Who are the all of both clauses? Are they the same, and if so, is any support given to the notion of an *apokatastasis* or restoration of all men?" Certainly they are identical, and signify all men without limitation. But the ultimate difference between "the all" men who are shut up under disobedience, and "the all" men upon whom mercy is shown, is that by all men this mercy is not accepted, and so men become self-excluded from the salvation of God. God's act remains the same, equally gracious, equally universal, whether men accept His mercy or not. Hodge says somewhat differently: "As therefore all men had forfeited every claim to the divine mercy, God had determined to display His goodness by having mercy upon all. (that is upon the Jews as well as the Gentiles), and thus bring all ultimately to one fold, under one shepherd."

I have thus gone over the passages quoted by Mr. McD. as favouring the view of restoration, giving the comments of standard authorities on them, and it will be seen that these authorities agree with the views of the Confession of Faith in their interpretation of them, the only exception being the interpretation of Ellicott on Col. 1. 20. But even there he is far from asserting that the restoration view is distinctly supported, but leaves the passage as one, the full meaning of which he is not prepared to state, while in speaking on the parallel passage in Ephesians, he distinctly repudiates the doctrine. And this much is manifest from these passages, that there is no such clear support or expression of the idea of restoration as we have of the truth of eternal punishment in the opposing passages. If the former is there at all, it is only by an inference which is no more natural, no more necessary, than other inferences which do not at all imply such a doctrine. Mr. McD. says: "I repeat that the teaching of the

ments of Scripture. Again in chap. xxx. 11, of the state of man after death. It says: 1. . . . "And the souls of the wicked are cast into hell, where they remain in torments and utter darkness, reserved to the judgment of the great day. Besides these two places for souls separated from their bodies, the Scriptures acknowledge to none."
2. "The bodies of the unjust shall, by the power of Christ, be raised to dishonour; the bodies of the just," etc.

These again are not very strong statements in view of the Scripture language on the subject. Again in chap. xxx. 3, on the last Judgment, it is said in almost Scripture words, "but the wicked that know not God and obey not the gospel of Jesus Christ, shall be cast into eternal torments and be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of His power." This is the whole offending of the much traduced Confession of Faith. Will any one, even the most ardent hater of it say that it dogmatizes on this subject. Does it in one word go beyond the severity of Scripture itself. Could any one who holds the doctrine of eternal punishment state that doctrine more moderately than it is there stated. I think not. And is it not warranted by Scripture most clearly in stating what it does. I think every unprejudiced reader, whether he be a restorationist or not will admit that it is. Mr. McD., therefore, is not warranted in representing it as going beyond the clear statements of Scripture, and in contradiction to the assertion above made, we are quite warranted to say that the "teaching of Scripture" is quite as "clear on this matter as it is stated to be by the Confession of Faith of our own Church."

In conclusion, although I am aware there are some material points not noticed in the foregoing remarks, which have a bearing on the controversy—such as the term "all" in Rom. v. 18,—still I think, apart from what might be said on this, enough has been said to vindicate substantially the views of our confession and of our church, or at least to assist to a clearer understanding of these views those who may not previously have directed their attention to the subject. And with regard to that passage, Rom. v. 18,

where it is said, " . . . even so by the righteousness of one the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life,"—the term "all" is explained by Alford and other writers in the same sense in which it is explained in the passages above quoted—namely, excluding the idea of the restoration of the lost. And as to the "triumphant tone" in which it is said the apostle delivers this truth, no one will seriously attempt to base an argument on any fancied singularity of tone attaching to the apostle's words. We have surely enough of ground for diversity of opinion in the language of Scripture, without introducing the supposed tone of the various writers as an element to be considered in arriving at a conclusion as to the doctrines they teach.

It has been shown then that there are quite as many and as great difficulties arising from the view of Restoration, as from the doctrine of an eternal punishment for the wicked. It has been shown that the former view has no clear direct support from Scripture, and that the latter has very clear and definite support from many passages. And it has been shown that to adopt this old heresy is to alter not one article, but every article of our creed, and to introduce another Gospel which is not the Gospel we have received and believed. And I think it will appear from what has been said, that there is no need of being alarmed at a candid and intelligent study of this awful and important subject, that there is no likelihood of the foundations of our faith being shaken, or any alteration being effected in the common belief of all evangelical churches. It will afford me satisfaction if this attempt to elucidate the truth should lead anyone to more confirmed views on the subject, or should lead some one more competent to expound and defend the truth of Scripture on this important subject. I trust nothing has been said to give offence to Mr. McD. I have sought to avoid doing so. But if anything unbecoming a fair examination of his views has crept in, I trust he will overlook it as unintended, and not take amiss a friendly attempt to controvert what seem to be the tendencies of his sermon, and to point out as it appears to me the unfounded nature of the theory which his sermon seems to favour. I

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would close this imperfect review of the subject with the words of a Divine already quoted : " Whatever, therefore, be the fate of human speculations on this tremendous topic, be it ours to cultivate the simplicity of faith which is independent of them. Even though in its vastness and mystery it continue to rebuke our feeble reason, let it stand in the naked simplicity of fact ; a truth great, and terrible and certain ; planted deep in the nature of God's attributes, and, therefore, unfathomable as all things that are of Him ; but withal addressing itself to the simplest and strongest feelings of man, his dread of pain, his horror of shame, and misery, and death ; meeting him at every turn to evil, and casting a fearful shadow across those pleasures that are not of God, and those glories where God's glory is forgotten ; meeting you at the first fatal steps upon that course which ends in the abyss of woe it denounces, and warning you at once to flee the bondage of seductions which grow as they are obliged, and strengthen with every victory ; warning you that all the temporal results of sin—all are but shadows of the overwhelming penalty it brings, when the mercy, which still restrains to these limits the fullness of divine vengeance shall have ceased ; and the sin and the punishment which are now but temporary, passing together into the world of eternity, and still, as ever, bound in inseparable links, shall become themselves alike eternal."







